

State Service Plan 2013-2015

Introduction

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission (the Commission) envisions a future where the people of Louisiana are inspired to serve and are actively engaged in improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens. The mission of the Commission is to build and sustain high quality programs that meet the needs of Louisiana's citizens and promote an ethic of service.

The Commission's purpose is to encourage community service as a means of local and state problem solving; to promote and support citizen involvement in government and private programs throughout the state; to develop a long term, comprehensive vision and plan for action for community service initiatives in Louisiana; to act as the state's policy making body for the Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation); and to serve as the state's liaison to other national and state organizations which support its mission.

The Commission supports the identified strategic goals within the Corporation for National and Community Service and the 2009 Serve America Act. It also aligns its efforts with the Office of the Lt. Governor's strategic initiatives and the State Priority Goals. The goal of the Office of the Lt. Governor is to improve the quality of life for Louisiana's citizens through educational opportunities, cultural enrichment, access to public facilities and economic development.

The State Priority Goals are Youth Education, Diversified Economic Growth, Transportation, Hurricane Protection and Emergency Preparedness, Public Safety, Safe and Thriving Children and Families, Better Health, Natural Resources and Transparent, Accountable, and Effective Government.

We believe that citizen service provides opportunities for individuals to achieve academic success, to develop job skills, to strengthen communities and to build a culture of good citizenship and personal responsibility.

Focus areas

The Commission continues to strengthen strategic alliances with statewide and national groups that offer expertise, resources and/or funding in support of national service and volunteerism in Louisiana. Partners include:

- Louisiana State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service
- National Civilian Community Corps—Vicksburg Campus
- Louisiana Department of Education
- Louisiana Association of Volunteer Center Directors (LAVCD)
- Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LAVOAD)
- Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO)

- Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)
- Governor's Office of Disability Affairs
- Louisiana Civic Education Commission
- Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Committee (LYAC)
- Encore Louisiana Commission
- Points of Light Institute/HandsOn Network
- DOVIA Baton Rouge and DOVIA New Orleans

The 2013-2015 State Service Plan articulates the Commission's three-year strategy for coordinating and maximizing national service and volunteerism across the state. It will serve to guide funding decisions, program development activities and strategic long-range program outreach in Louisiana. It has been developed with public input through a series of 10 regional Listening Sessions across the state. The sessions, which engaged over 250 individuals, were promoted through news releases, email invitations, VolunteerLouisiana.gov, Facebook and Twitter. Stakeholders unable to personally attend were encouraged to submit their thoughts through paper or online surveys. Nearly 25 online and paper surveys were received.

From the Listening Tours held July through October 2012, several overarching needs were identified across the state which the Commission in collaboration with its partners will seek to address:

- Resource development for nonprofits and faith-based organizations
- Comprehensive state messaging about volunteerism and civic engagement and where to find opportunities
- Greater outreach about national service opportunities
- Greater communication between the state and communities, and between nonprofits within communities
- Professional development of nonprofits and faith-based organizations

The Commission remains committed to allocating its resources to meet the critical needs of Louisiana's peoples and communities, recognizing that each community may have certain local or regional priorities. It will continue to reach out to diverse community and faith-based organizations.

Specific programming strategies

AmeriCorps

The Commission has identified specific strategies to grow and expand the AmeriCorps presence within the state and specifically areas which are underrepresented. Central to this goal is the AmeriCorps*State program administered within the Commission. Because every community has specific needs, the AmeriCorps* State program seeks projects that will address the identified needs of the local community or region.

However, the Commission will focus on several strategies over the next three years:

1. Cultivation of additional intermediary organizations: Based on the realities of rural areas finding enough resources to meet the required match, the intermediary approach is a viable solution for under-represented regions of the state, specifically the Northeast and Central Louisiana regions. The Commission will work within these regions to identify possible intermediary models and ways to support such efforts. The biggest challenge will be identification of suitable and sustainable match.
2. National Direct programs: The Commission will proactively reach out to National Directs to identify and to encourage them to consider placing sites in underrepresented areas of the state, specifically Northwest and Southwest Louisiana. The Commission will work to develop an affinity group bringing together all sectors of national service operating in Louisiana to discuss efforts and ways to partner and collaborate.
3. AmeriCorps Alums: Given the large number of alumni who have chosen to remain in Louisiana, particularly in the Greater New Orleans area, the Commission will support efforts to develop and expand an AmeriCorps alum group which can serve as a training resource to programs and as spokespersons for national service in the state.

Volunteer Outreach

The Commission believes that all citizens can serve. The Commission focus areas to encourage an ethic of service among all citizens will include:

1. www.VolunteerLouisiana.gov: Continue to increase the scope, reach and awareness of its state volunteerism portal. While the Commission is currently engaged in an RFP process to choose a new volunteer management system and data aggregator box, the goal is to have this implemented in 2013. Re-engaging past registrants and expanding to new volunteers and volunteer opportunities will continue to be a goal of this three-year plan. We will continue the marketing campaign, All We Need Is U, to encourage volunteerism throughout the state and use an annual study conducted by LSU to independently assess our efforts.
2. DOVIA: The Commission appreciates the value of Directors of Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA) and the support and training it provides in the communities it serves. The Commission will work with the state's independent Volunteer Centers/HandsOn affiliates or other partners such as United Ways or LANO to start DOVIA networks within communities that could benefit from the training and networking it provides.

Collaborative Projects and Initiatives

VISTA

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission has worked with the CNCS State Office to host the LA Serve VISTA Project, which places VISTA members in Volunteer Centers and supports its AmeriCorps*State programs or other nonprofit or faith-

based organizations which want to establish or expand a volunteer program. Currently the project has 27 member slots to place in host sites.

Southwest Cluster Conference

The Commission will actively participate in the Southwest Cluster Conference for Commission staff, program directors and members by serving on the Planning Committee and identifying possible funding sources. It will identify funding to allow programs to participate in the conference each year.

Cities of Service

The Commission will use the national Cities of Service model to encourage communities to embrace volunteerism and civic engagement as a means to solving pressing social issues. The Commission will work closely with volunteer connector organizations to provide training to communities wishing to become Cities of Service.

LANO Annual Conference

The LANO annual state conference provides a unique opportunity to bring nonprofits, faith-based and national service programs together to discuss national service resources around the state, trends in volunteering and trainings to enhance skills in volunteer management. This conference also provides the opportunity to recognize outstanding volunteers and social innovators making tangible differences in their communities.

Days of Service/Recognition Weeks

The Commission and its partners continue to promote and support MLK Day, 9/11 Day of Remembrance and Service, Make a Difference Day, National Volunteer Week and Global Youth Service Day, as well as AmeriCorps Week. We will continue to apply to serve as the state lead for Global Youth Service Day through Youth Service America so that greater coordination can be achieved in community-wide service projects.

Disaster Preparedness and Response Training Program

The Commission offers disaster preparedness and response training to local communities through local governments, parish Offices of Emergency Preparedness, nonprofit or faith-based organizations, as well as AmeriCorps*State, VISTA and National Direct program members actively serving in Louisiana. The training includes workshops on Volunteer Reception Centers, basic concepts of National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) and working in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (LAVOAD) and Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP)

The Commission will continue to support LAVOAD and actively participate in events which help nonprofits and faith-based organizations make plans to respond to natural and man-made disasters. We will also facilitate the

communication and collaboration between the nonprofit sector and state agencies, such as Volunteer Louisiana, the Office of the Lt. Governor and GOHSEP.